

**NASHOBA
ASSOCIATED
BOARDS OF
HEALTH
(NABH)**

**NASHOBA
NURSING
SERVICE &
HOSPICE**



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Community Connections

Ashburnham, Ashby, Ayer, Berlin, Bolton, Boxborough, Devens, Dunstable, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Littleton, Lunenburg, Pepperell, Shirley, Stow and Townsend



Dunstable, MA
Photo Credit: Bridgette Braley

Greetings from the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health!

We hope that you had a chance to enjoy the beautiful New England weather and foliage this fall.

Thank you all for the hospitality and support you've given us throughout our very busy flu clinic season! With your help, we were able to vaccinate just shy of 3,000 residents throughout our district, ranging in age from infants 6 months to adults 101 years old. (More than last year!)

Now, we're gearing up for winter /early spring which can be the peak time for flu and other viral illnesses in the community. Frequent and thorough handwashing is still the best way to prevent spreading infection, but I want to remind you it's not too late to get your flu shot. With the crowds and gatherings that the holiday season brings, it's the perfect time to protect yourself and loved ones by getting immunized. So, as you're making your holiday lists and travel plans, remember to give us a call to make arrangements to get a flu shot. (As supplies last.)

Warm regards,
Tamara Bedard, RN
Community Health Manager
978-772-3335 ext. 340



Well Water Testing

By Director Jim Garreffo, RS

Nashoba Associated Boards of Health

If you live in a rural community there is a good chance the water provided to your home comes from a well located on your property. Unlike those who receive the water from a local municipal water department, you are responsible for ensuring your water is safe for consumption. Many individuals may be unaware of the condition of their well or of the quantity or quality of the water it supplies. The purpose of this article is to get you thinking about your well and water quality and provide you some valuable links to State and Federal resources which can provide you with more detailed information.

Well types: There are three basic well types we see in the communities we serve. The first is an artesian or drilled well; an artesian well is drilled into the water bearing zones in the bedrock and is generally signified by a 6" steel pipe protruding from the ground in your yard. A point, or driven well is generally pounded or driven in the sandy gravel soil deposit into the groundwater; the groundwater is the source of water delivered to your house. Lastly, depending on the age of your property, you may have a shallow or dug well. As the name implies these wells are dug into the soil until groundwater is encountered, the hole is then lined with stone or concrete; groundwater serves as the source of water for this type of well. Regardless of the well type you should avoid storage of hazardous materials in the area around the well and make sure the area around the well is graded to prevent the ponding of surface water around the well. Use care when applying lawn care products around your well.

Water testing: If you have a private well you are responsible for testing your water to insure it is safe to drink; we often encounter well owners who have never or rarely test their well water. Here are some things to consider regarding well water testing. Water should be tested at a Massachusetts certified laboratory, the [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov) sites will provide a link to the laboratory currently certified. You should be wary of free water testing kits left on your mail box or offers at big box hardware stores.

How often should you test your well water? The [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov) will provide you with a schedule of water quality parameters to be tested and frequencies for testing. Other reasons you may consider testing are: a noticeable change in the water quality (odor, taste or color) or quantity, illness in your family that many be attributed to drinking water and the location of your well relative to areas of suspected contamination.

As the owner of a private well you are the person responsible for providing safe drinking water to you and your family and the links below can provide you with a wealth of information to assist you in that task. If you have questions regarding your well or water quality you can also contact our office and speak to the Health Agent serving your community.

<https://www.mass.gov/topics/drinking-water>

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/protect-your-family-a-guide-to-water-quality-testing-for-private-wells>

<https://www.epa.gov/privatewells>

Well Water Testing



10 Tips for Managing Diabetes and the Holidays

By Joanne McCole RN, BSN

Nashoba Nursing Service & Hospice

For many of us overindulging during the holidays has become an annual tradition. Trying to manage diabetes during this food filled and busy season can seem next to impossible. I would like to offer some helpful tips to stay on track and still have fun while not adding inches to your waistline and points to your A1C.

1. **Planning-** Try to stay to your normal meal and exercise schedule as much as possible. Don't skip a meal in anticipation of a big party buffet. This will cause greater fluctuations in your blood sugar and usually leads to overindulging.
2. **Portion Control-** Continue to use your plate as your guide. $\frac{1}{4}$ lean protein, $\frac{1}{4}$ grain or starchy vegetable (rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes), $\frac{1}{2}$ the plate green or non-starchy vegetables (salad, green beans, cauliflower). This works for the appetizer plate as well. Start with the vegetable platter and then a small portion of your favorite appetizer. After filling your plate move away from the buffet to avoid going back for seconds.
3. **Pick one favorite high carbohydrate item-** If you love stuffing (it's my personal favorite) then have the stuffing but skip the mashed potatoes and dinner rolls.
4. **Bring a dish-** The best way to know there will be a healthy (and tasty) option at a party is to offer to bring a dish. Low sugar recipes are available on the American Diabetes Association website.
5. **Exercise 30 minutes a day 5x/week-** This can be broken up into 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the evening. Exercise increases insulin sensitivity and also enables your body to use up glucose for energy more efficiently. This will help lower your blood sugar in the short term and when done regularly will help lower your A1C.
6. **Carry healthy snacks-** During a day of marathon shopping it's easy to give in to the temptation of the food court. Avoid the pretzels, ice cream, and pizza and stash some snacks in the car or your purse. Nuts are the easiest and most portable snack offering protein, carbohydrates, and healthy fats to keep you satisfied.
7. **Alcohol-** Doctors recommend no more than 1 drink/day for women and 2 drinks/ day for men, with diabetes. Be careful of mixed drinks they are often made with simple syrup (a combination of sugar and water). Keep festive with seltzer water with some fresh fruit.
8. **Keep the festivities to that day-** If you are hosting send the tempting food home with your guests. If you are a guest, thank your host for a lovely party and leave the slices of pie for them to enjoy. Get back on track the day after the party with your regular healthy eating. Don't use the holidays as an excuse to abandon your healthy habits for 2 months.
9. **If you are insulin dependent** you may need to check your blood sugar more often and adjust your insulin dosages. This should be done with consultation by your physician.
10. **Remember** the true meaning of the holidays is not the food, but the time spent enjoying family, friends, and local traditions.



Q & A on Celiac Disease



About the author:

My name is Nicole and I am a nursing student that is shadowing the town nurse at the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health. I was diagnosed with Celiac Disease 7 years ago and have been gluten free ever since. I get lots of questions from people about Celiac Disease, so I thought this would be a great opportunity to share what I've learned.

Q: What is Celiac Disease?

A: Celiac Disease is an autoimmune disorder of the small intestine that is triggered by a protein called “gluten.” When gluten is ingested, the immune system is activated like it would for an infection. The only problem is that there isn’t a bacteria or virus that needs to be attacked. Instead, the immune system attacks the small intestine. The small intestine in our body is responsible for absorbing most of the nutrients we get from our food. If the small intestine gets damaged, it can be difficult for that person to absorb the correct nutrients. Therefore, many people with Celiac Disease present with vague symptoms such as fatigue, weakness, anemia, etc. Once a person with Celiac Disease stops eating gluten, the small intestine heals, and they can correctly absorb nutrients again. A gluten free diet is the only cure currently, but there are researchers working on better medical treatments.

Q: What is gluten?

A: Gluten is a small protein found in wheat, barley, and rye. It may also be found in some oats if the oats were harvested in the same field as wheat, barley, or rye.

Q: What puts me at risk for Celiac Disease?

A: There is a huge genetic component to Celiac Disease and other autoimmune diseases. Testing is suggested for people with relatives that have Celiac Disease, people that have another autoimmune disease (Diabetes Type I, Lupus, Psoriasis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Hashimoto’s hypothyroidism, etc), and/or people with Celiac Disease symptoms.

Q: What testing is available to find out if I have Celiac Disease?

A: The most common testing is a blood test, but it is not always accurate. The most accurate testing is an endoscopy with a biopsy of the small intestine. It is required that the patient continue eating gluten containing products while being tested. This is because the test results are more likely to come back negative if the patient were already on a gluten free diet.

Q: What is the difference between Celiac Disease and a gluten intolerance?

A: As I mentioned, Celiac Disease is an autoimmune disorder that is triggered by gluten. Because this causes damage to the body, people with Celiac Disease need to be extra careful about avoiding even the smallest amount of gluten. With gluten intolerances, people have a difficult time digesting gluten, so they avoid it to prevent an upset stomach and other gastrointestinal symptoms. Because the reaction is less severe, people with gluten intolerances usually do not have to be as strict about cross contamination.



Q & A on Celiac Disease

Q: What do you mean by “cross contamination?”

A: Because we cannot see the gluten particles, it can be difficult to imagine what I mean by “cross contamination.” The easiest way to explain it is to use a visual example. Since wheat flour is filled with gluten, I think that would be a good product to use. Say someone is cooking a pizza with wheat flour and they have a pair of gloves on. Most times you can see the flour all over the gloves. Now, imagine that the same person goes to make a gluten free pizza without changing their gloves. That wheat flour is now all over the gluten free pizza and can make a person with Celiac Disease very sick. Most cross contamination is not as obvious as this example because you can't always see the flour particles or crumbs. That is why it is important to teach kitchen staff about cross contamination. The easiest way to make gluten free products in a kitchen with normal products is to have a small area designated to gluten free. This area would include a clean table, clean utensils, and new gloves that are only used for the gluten free products. For jars of condiments that are reused, it is best to have ones specifically for the gluten free products because flour or breadcrumbs can contaminate the jars.

Q: Are gluten free foods healthier?

A: I don't always like this question because it depends on what gluten free foods. A gluten free chocolate chip cookie is not going to be healthy. Just because gluten is removed does not mean that all the sugar, fat, and calories are also removed. When people say that gluten free is healthier, they usually mean that eating simpler, naturally gluten free meals such as chicken, brown rice, and vegetables will be healthier than eating mac and cheese or pizza for dinner.

Q: What foods are naturally gluten free?

A: Meats (without anything on them), rice (except rice pilaf), corn, potatoes, milk, cheese, butter, fruits, vegetables, etc.

Q: I have a friend that needs to eat gluten free. What is a good resource I can use to find restaurants that they can safely eat at?

A: I like the phone app called “Find Me Gluten Free.” It uses your location to find the closest restaurant that has been noted to have gluten free options. It also allows people with gluten intolerances or Celiac Disease to rate their experience. Be aware, that not all restaurants with gluten free options may show up on the app. If there is a specific restaurant you want to go to, go directly to their website or call them to find more direct information.

Q: With the holidays coming up, where can I find gluten free baked goods for my gluten free family members?

A: My favorite café/bakery is Twist in Millis, MA and Burlington, MA. Pictured right is my Thanksgiving order from last year. There may be other bakeries closer to the Nashoba area.



Nicole Gilcoine

Candidate for Bachelor of
Science in Nursing '19
MCPHS University

Q: If I have more questions, what resources are available?

A: The Celiac Disease Foundation is a great resource for anything related to Celiac Disease, including current research. The website is <https://celiac.org/>.

Community Health Nursing Clinical Experience at Nashoba Associated Boards of Health : A Student 's Perspective



Nashoba Associated Boards of Health has been nothing short of amazing in showing my classmate and I the ropes on how community health nursing works. When we first started clinical here it was a little nerve wracking because we've been used to the hospital setting and not having that was a huge shift in our learning.

Flu clinics have been a huge part of our clinical experience thus far and one of my favorite aspects of community health. I learned that nursing is more than just the act of providing care; it is about being patient, counseling, and opening up to our patients to allow them to be more comfortable around you. One of our biggest tasks during the flu clinics was making sure the kids were comfortable enough to get their shots. Many of them cried but once we were able to get down to their level and help them understand that we would make the shot as quick and painless as possible, they were more willing to get it done. The funny part was that half the kiddos didn't even realize we had given them their shot because they had gotten themselves so worked about it.

Overall, public health is something that I feel like keeps our communities running without us even knowing. The fact that we are able to have nurses go out into the homes and help educate patients on things that they may have forgotten or to just lend a listening ear is amazing. When I first thought of public health nursing, I didn't realize how much work went into caring for all of these patients. This job is not easy, and it makes you understand nursing in a different manner. You may not be in the hospital working a 12-hour shift but public health nurses work hard to keep our patients in the home setting. This clinical rotation has been one of the best yet for the simple fact that I am learning more of the therapeutic side of nursing. I've enjoyed the experience thus far and can't wait to learn more and more about public health nursing!



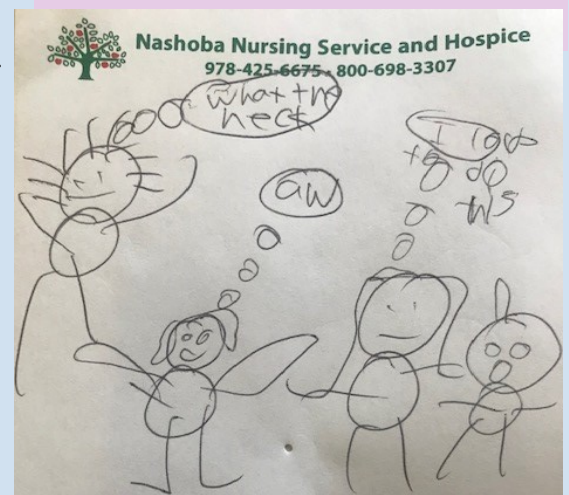
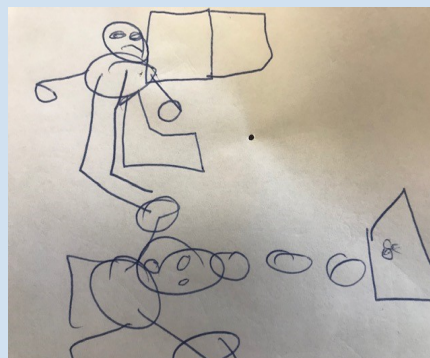
My name is Makisha Germain and I am a nursing student at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences completing my community clinical rotation at the Nashoba Board of Health. Prior to this program I earned my first bachelor's degree in health sciences, and it really opened my eyes to healthcare; since then I've fallen in love.

When I'm not studying, I love shopping, watching movies and hanging out with family and friends. Graduation is near and I can't wait to start my career in the nursing field!

Makisha Germain

Candidate for Bachelor of
Science in Nursing '19
MCPHS University

Artist Credit:
A gift from one of our adorable ,
albeit reluctant, vaccine recipients



CLINIC SCHEDULE

Dates & times are subject to change

*Please check our website for more information: www.nashoba.org



Town	Clinic Location	Address	Day	Time
Ashburnham	Town Hall	32 Main St	4th Mon	11-12
Ayer	Cambridge St. Office	51 Cambridge St.	Every Fri By appt. only	9-12
Ayer	COA at Senior Housing	18 Pond St.	3rd Fri	11-12
Berlin	First Parish Church	24 Central St.	1st Thurs	9:30-11:00
Bolton	Senior Housing/ Senior Center	600 Main St.	3rd Thurs	9:30-11:30
Boxborough	Community Center at the United Church of Christ, Congregational	723 Massachusetts Ave	4th Tues	11:30-12:30
Dunstable	Library	588 Main St	4th Wed	11-12
Groton	Senior Center	163 West Main St	3rd Wed	1:30-2:30
Harvard	Hildreth House (COA)	13 Ayer Rd	3rd Tues	12:30-1:30
Lancaster	Community Center	39 Harvard Rd	1st Tues	8-10
Littleton	COA Room 230	33 Shattuck St.	2nd Tues	10-11
Lunenburg	Eagle House	25 Memorial Dr.	4th Thurs	9-11
Pepperell	Senior Center	37 Nashua Rd.	3rd Wed	10-12
Shirley	Senior Center	9 Parker Rd.	2nd Thurs	9:30-10:30
Stow	Senior Center	509 Great Rd	1st Wed	10-12
Townsend	Senior Center	16 Dudley Rd.	2nd Wed	12-2

